



Cathedral Newsletter

April 2016

THE ANNUNCIATION TO
OUR MOST HOLY LADY,
THE MOTHER OF GOD
AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY
25 March / 7 April



Troparion

Today is the crown of our salvation /
and the manifestation of the mystery
that is from all eternity. / The Son of
God becomes Son of the Virgin / and
Gabriel announces the good tidings
of grace. / Therefore let us also join
him / and cry aloud to the Mother
of God: // Hail, thou who art full of
grace: the Lord is with thee!

Kontakion

To thee, O Mother of God, victorious
leader of triumphant hosts, / we thy
servants delivered from calamity, offer
hymns of thanksgiving. / In thine
invincible power keep us free from
every peril, // that we may cry to
thee: "Hail, thou Bride unwedded!"

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Diocesan News

THE FEAST OF THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY CELEBRATED AT THE PARISH OF ST NICHOLAS IN OXFORD



On Sunday 20th March, the Parish of St Nicholas the Wonderworker in Oxford kept the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy with solemnity, as is its usual custom. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the clergy and congregation, led by the cross and servers carrying banners, walked in a procession through the streets surrounding the church, carrying the holy icons.

On returning to the church, the special service for the Sunday of Orthodoxy was performed, together with the reading of the Synodikon, the singing of “memory eternal” for the defenders of the icons and the Orthodox faith, and the proclamation of “Many years” to the holy Orthodox patriarchs and hierarchs. In the evening of the same day, clergy and parishioners participated in a Pan-Orthodox Vespers service, held at the Romanian Orthodox parish of St John Cassian in Oxford. The vespers, which takes place with the blessing of the local hierarchs, is held in one of Oxford’s Orthodox parishes each year by rotation. After the service, all the members of the congregation enjoyed a bring-and-share supper, with dishes prepared by members of each of the parishes represented.

By Archpriest Stephen Platt

Cathedral News

PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS CELEBRATED AT THE CATHEDRAL

On the First Sunday of Great Lent the Orthodox Church celebrates the Day of the Triumph of Orthodoxy – the feast which was established late in the ninth century in order to celebrate the ultimate victory over the heresy of iconoclasm. On this day believers of all the Ortho-

dox jurisdictions in Great Britain meet annually for a service which is held in different languages. This year on 20th March, the Pan-Orthodox Vespers was served at the London Dormition Cathedral, which is quite symbolic because the 300th anniversary of the Russian Orthodoxy in the British Isles is celebrated this year.

Archbishop Silouan of the British Isles and Ireland, Archbishop Gregorios of



Thyateira and Great Britain, Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, clergy and the faithful of Orthodox jurisdictions in Britain participated in the service. Several choirs from the Serbian, Greek, Antiochian, Romanian, Georgian and Russian Local Orthodox Churches sang alternately in English, Slavonic, Serbian, Romanian, Arabic, Greek and Georgian.

This multilingualism together with various musical traditions created a wonderful sense of unity in diversity within the joint liturgical service, with its fascinating beauty and unusual singing. ‘Let us pray to the Lord’ is proclaimed in Church Slavonic, and a choir replies, ‘Lord have mercy’ in Arabic. All the Churches participated equally in the celebration, and a significant number of the prayers were in English, making it possible for everybody to follow the service.

The sermon in English was delivered by Protopresbyter-Stavrophore Dr Luca Novakovic (Serbian Orthodox Church). He mentioned that exactly 100 years ago, in 1916, the Holy Hierarch Nikolai (Velimirovic) of Ohrid and Zhicha gave a sermon at St

Paul’s Cathedral before King George V and members of the British elite. In that sermon, St Nikolai stressed that the British and Serbian peoples were linked to each other through the common ancient traditions of Christianity and through those seeking God with all their hearts. It can be added that this also concerns us, since it is the British land that has gathered all of us and has reminded us of the richness, greatness and diversity of the world of Orthodoxy.



After the service, the guests were invited to share a Lenten meal which had been prepared with love by the Dormition Cathedral’s Sisterhood. Undoubtedly, the Pan-Orthodox Vespers was an important event in the life of the Dormition Cathedral and enabled us to get to know our brothers in Christ from other Orthodox Churches better.

By Julia Pliauksta.

A PRIESTLY ORDINATION AT THE CATHEDRAL

On the Sunday of the Cross, April 3rd, at the request of Bishop Sofrony of Gubkinsk, Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh ordained Hierodeacon



Innokenty (Kolesnikov) to the priesthood during the Divine Liturgy. In his address to the congregation and Hieromonk Innokenty after the Liturgy, Archbishop Elisey said: *“Today we have a special blessing from God, the grace of Christ has called one more of our brothers to be a priest at the Altar of God. Dear Father Innokenty, it is obvious that you desire to serve God and follow Christ, to be with Him. This is the main thing. You should remember that your personal inclination to God is a natural response to Christ’s prior love for you. Every priest wants his flock to hear him, to respect his spiritual authority and take what he preaches seriously. But no amount of effort and none of the natural human characteristics such as a good intellect, a beautiful voice, good manners or personal charm can help you to draw people to Christ if you don’t have this inner thirst*

for God, this responding love and aspiration to be with Him. Your pastoral service will be blessed if, when you meet people, there burns in your heart the flame of love for Christ, your Teacher and Lord, the beloved Man and God, with Whom you want to be and Whom you desire to serve.”

CHEESEFARE WEEK - MASLENITSA IN THE CHILDREN’S SCHOOL



On March 12th the parish school of the Cathedral hosted a celebration of Maslenitsa (Cheesefare Week). After lessons, during their games, children were visited by Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, who congratulated them on the forthcoming Great Lent. Children spoke about how they understand the meaning of fasting. Answering the question of Vladyka about how Lent begins, the children did not hesitate to answer: ‘With Forgiveness!’ Archbishop Elisey commented on the good family atmosphere among the pupils, teachers and parents. Together, at the table with pancakes and cakes, they shared the joy of the approaching spiritual spring - Great Lent.



CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER 30 YEARS AGO

Panorthodox Vespers, April 1986 (Newsletter No. 185)

The Greek Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom was host to this year's Panorthodox Vespers - insofar as one can apply the term "panorthodox" to a service to which, it appeared, only one of some seven Orthodox Churches represented in London had been invited. Metropolitan Anthony celebrated, with Fr Alexander, Fr John Lee and Fr Panteleimon Koulouris, and our own Cathedral choir shared the singing with a couple of the Greek Cathedral singers whose help had been enlisted at a day's notice. It can at least be said that this year, unlike last year, the service took place.

What is the matter with us all? Vespers on the Sunday of Orthodoxy is the one regular occasion for Orthodox of all jurisdictions to come together, not to meet as individuals nor to affirm a formal unity through official representatives, but as parishes, worshipping communities testifying to their unity in the eucharistic community of the Church in their own area. How is it that this joyful celebration of our Orthodox faith can become a matter of such indifference?

In his sermon at the Panorthodox Vespers, Metropolitan Anthony spoke of the Icon of God in the human person, and the sorrow and love with which we respond to this Icon when it has become disfigured. One might speak similarly of the Church, whose unity is to be a manifestation of the unity of the Holy Trinity. Let us pray that next year, when we celebrate the 1200th anniversary of the Seventh Ecumenical Council which set out the theological basis for the veneration of the Icon, the Icon of the Church will shine forth more clearly on the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

Elizabeth Briere

'RETURN TO PARADISE' – THE MEANING OF LENT

Lent begins with Forgiveness Sunday, which is also known as Cheesefare Sunday and the day the Church commemorates the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden. The connections between these names help us to understand Lent and the importance of observing the Great Fast.



The story begins in Eden: before the Fall, Adam and Eve enjoyed a close relationship with God. The Bible even tells us He was accustomed to walk with them in the evenings. There was no shadow between them; no sense that humans needed to cross a gulf to commune with Him. After the Fall, God and man became distant. And yet, we

still feel a great longing to return to our original, natural condition that we possessed before the Fall. The 'nostalgia for paradise' is still present.

Our innate longing to be restored to our true selves is what lies behind Lent. The

return to God is a key theme of this season. We fast not so that we might suffer but to draw closer to the primeval harmony of Eden, where Adam and Eve were vegetarian and meat eating was unknown. This is why the Church treats fasting so seriously: although it accepts that not all believers can adhere to the full fast, it has always opted to keep the general rule in place and permit derogations rather than encourage believers to decide upon their own fasting rules. It has been observed by many that fasting makes it easier to pray because one starts to feel lighter. Fasting is needed as a support for our prayers and a discipline that draws us closer to God. Conversely, prayer and attendance at the Lenten weekday services makes it easier to keep the Fast.

There are three main elements of the Lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The latter means doing good to others in the name of the Lord, helping them. These three things together make a 'proper fast'.

If the basic motive of Lent is repentance and reconciliation with God it is clear that we have to be at peace with one another. Love for God and love for one's neighbor are inseparable, after all. For our fasting to be acceptable to God and profitable for us, we need to forgive and to be reconciled with one another.

It is important to understand what forgiveness is and what it is not. It is not the same as making out that everything is fine and no offence was taken. Nor does it require us to pretend that something that hurts us has not happened. The Church accepts that wrongdoing brings consequences, often serious ones. Forgiveness is rather about letting go of thoughts that possess us, making us bitter and inconsolable. Forgiveness brings freedom in its wake because it lets us focus on the things that matter. By forgiving, we set ourselves and others free. This is why we must forgive each other before (and during!) Lent, that period above all others where we must strive to devote ourselves to those things that truly matter.

The article is based on one of the Bible Study talks by Fr Joseph Skinner that took place at the Cathedral on Tuesday 8th March.

By Richard Hill and Tatiana Salmon

Legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

SERMON ON THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

7th April 1989

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

This year the Feast of the Annunciation, according to our calendar, falls just at the end of the week when we venerate the Cross. It is significant, because you



*Metropolitan Anthony
of Sourouz*

remember the words which were spoken to the Mother of God when she brought her Child, Jesus, to the Temple: that a sword will pierce her heart. This sword was the death of Christ upon the Cross. In the Annunciation we see both the promise of salvation given to the whole of mankind, (indeed, the promise that one day God will be all in all, and that the whole Creation will become the shining, glorious vesture of God) and the Cross.

Let us reflect on this conjunction of events. The Mother of God received today the greatest promise which mankind can receive. At the same time, in her perfect surrender: Let it be unto me according to His will! - she accepts the tragedy that will follow. We are saved by her faith, we are saved by her surrender; without her the Incarnation would have not taken place - but at what cost to her.

This is why it could be said once that if the Mother of God can forgive us our unfaithfulness, our betrayal of Christ, a life unworthy of the faith which we proclaim - if she can forgive us, no power in Heaven or earth can reject us. And this is why we pray to her, and say, All-Holy Mother of God, save us! Not because she can save us apart from the sacrificial love, the Incarnation, the life, the death, the descent into hell, the Resurrection, the Ascension of her Son, the Only-Begotten Son of God become the son of man; not because she can plead for us, but she can, in the very words of Christ at the Cross, say, Forgive! They do not know what they are doing...

But it is not enough to be forgiven: one must bear fruit of repentance. If we understand at what cost we are forgiven by God: the life and the death of His Only-Begotten Son, at what cost the Mother of God can intercede for us: the surrender of her life but also the gift unto death of her Only-Begotten Son, gratitude alone should prompt us to be worthy of this love, to be worthy of God, worthy of Mary the Virgin, worthy of our own selves. God's gift of self to us, Mary's gift of Him to us speaks to us of our eternal, immeasurable value in the eyes of God.

Let us therefore venerate worshipfully the event; and respond, respond with all our life, all our heart and mind, all there is in and of us to the trust which God has put into us. Because He gave His life for us, she surrendered - God for us, she gave Him unto death for us because God believes in us, because God hopes all things from us - let us respond to Him with all our life.

Amen.

Notes on the Church calendar for April

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION TO THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

March 25th / April 7th



The feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary comes nine months before Christmas on the 25th of March. It is the celebration of the announcing of the birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary as recorded in the Gospel of Saint Luke. The services of the feast of the Annunciation, the Matins and the Divine Liturgy, stress again and again the joyous news of the salvation of men in the birth of the Saviour. A special feature of this feast is the Matins Canon which has the character of a dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. Also among the more popular elements of the feast is the Magnification which has the form of our own salutation to the virgin mother with the words of the Archangel: With the voice of the Archangel we cry to Thee, O Pure One: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee! The celebration of the Annunciation, therefore, is the feast of our own reception of the glad tidings of salvation, and our own glorification of the maiden Mary who becomes the Mother of God in the flesh.

LAZARUS SATURDAY AND PALM SUNDAY

April 23rd - April 24th , 2016

The week following the Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt is called Palm or Branch Week. At the Tuesday services of this week the Church recalls that Jesus' friend Lazarus has died and that the Lord is going to raise him from the dead (Jn 11). As the days continue toward Saturday, the Church, in its hymns and verses, continues to follow Christ towards Bethany to the tomb of Lazarus. On Friday evening, the eve of the celebration of the Resurrection of Lazarus, the "*great and saving forty days*" of Great Lent are formally brought to an end: *Having accomplished the forty days for the benefit of our souls, we pray to Thee, O Lover of Man, that we may see the holy week of Thy passion, that in it we may glorify Thy greatness and Thine unspeakable plan of salvation for our sake . . .* (Vespers Hymn).

Lazarus Saturday is a paschal celebration. It is the only time in the entire Church Year that the resurrectional service of Sunday is celebrated on another day. At

the liturgy of Lazarus Saturday, the Church glorifies Christ as “the Resurrection and the Life” who, by raising Lazarus, has confirmed the universal resurrection of mankind even before His own suffering and death.



At the Divine Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday the baptismal verse from Galatians: As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3.27) replaces the Thrice-holy Hymn thus indicating the resurrectional character of the celebration, and the fact that Lazarus Saturday was once among the few great baptismal days in the Orthodox Church Year.

Because of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, Christ was hailed by the masses as the long-expected Messiah-King of Israel. Thus, in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, He entered Jerusalem, the City of the King, riding on the colt of an ass (Zech 9.9; Jn 12.12). The crowds greeted Him with branches in their hands and called out to Him with shouts of praise: Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The Son of David! The King of Israel! Because of this glorification by the people, the priests and scribes were finally driven “to destroy Him, to put Him to death” (Lk 19.47; Jn 11.53, 12.10).

The feast of Christ’s triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday, is one of the twelve major feasts of the Church. The services of this Sunday follow directly from those of Lazarus Saturday. The church building continues to be vested in resurrectional splendor, filled with hymns which continually repeat the Hosanna offered to Christ as the Messiah-King who comes in the name of God the Father for the salvation of the world.



The main troparion of Palm Sunday is the same one sung on Lazarus Saturday. It is sung at all of the services, and is used at the Divine Liturgy as the third antiphon which follows the other special psalm verses which are sung as the liturgical antiphons in the place of those normally used. The second troparion of the feast, as well as the kontakion and the other verses and hymns, all continue to glorify Christ’s triumphal manifestation “six days before the Passover” when he will give himself at the Supper and on the Cross for the life of the world.

At the vigil of the feast of Palm Sunday the prophecies of the Old Testament about the Messiah-King are read together with the Gospel accounts of the entry of Christ into Jerusalem. At Matins branches are blessed which the people carry throughout the celebration as the sign of their own glorification of Jesus as Saviour and King. These branches are usually palms, or, in the Slavic churches, pussy willows which came to be customary because of their availability and their early blossoming in the springtime.

As the people carry their branches and sing their songs to the Lord on Palm Sunday, they are judged together with the Jerusalem crowd. For it was the very same voices which cried Hosanna to Christ, which, a few days later, cried Crucify Him! Thus in the liturgy of the Church the lives of men continue to be judged as they hail Christ with the “branches of victory” and enter together with Him into the days of His “voluntary passion.”

HOLY WEEK



In the Orthodox Church the last week of Christ's life is officially called Passion Week. In popular terminology it is called Holy Week. Each day is designated in the service books as “great and holy.” There are special services every day of the week which are celebrated in all churches. Earthly life ceases for the faithful as they “go up with the Lord to Jerusalem” (Matins of Great and Holy Monday).

Each day of Holy Week has its own particular theme. The theme of Monday is that of the sterile fig tree which yields no fruit and is condemned. On Tuesday the accent is on the vigilance of the wise virgins who, unlike their foolish sisters, were ready when the Lord came to them. On Wednesday the focus is on the fallen woman who repents. Great emphasis is made in the liturgical services to compare the woman, a sinful harlot who is saved, to Judas, a chosen apostle who is lost. The one gives her wealth to Christ and kisses his feet; the other betrays Christ for money with a kiss.

The vigil on the eve of Holy Thursday is dedicated exclusively to the Passover Supper which Christ celebrated with his twelve apostles. The main theme of the day is the meal itself at which Christ commanded that the Passover of the New Covenant be eaten in remembrance of himself, of his body broken and his blood shed for the remission of sins. In addition, Judas' betrayal and Christ's washing of his disciples' feet is also central to the liturgical commemoration of the day.

Matins of Holy Friday are generally celebrated on Thursday night. The main feature of this service is the reading of twelve selections from the Gospels, all of which are accounts of the passion of Christ. The first of these twelve readings is Jn 13:31-18:1. It is Christ's long discourse with his apostles that ends with the so-called high priestly prayer. The final gospel tells of the sealing of the tomb and the setting of the watch (Mt 27:62-66). The twelve Gospel readings of Christ's passion are placed between the various parts of the service. The hymnology is all related to the sufferings of the Saviour and borrows heavily from the Gospels and the prophetic scriptures and psalms. The Lord's beatitudes are added to the service after the sixth gospel reading, and there is special emphasis given to the salvation of the thief who acknowledged Christ's Kingdom.

The first service belonging to Holy Saturday—called in the Church the Blessed Sabbath—is the Vespers of Good Friday. It is usually celebrated in the mid-afternoon to commemorate the burial of Jesus. Before the service begins, a “tomb” is erected in the middle of the church building and is decorated with flowers. Also a special icon which is painted on cloth (in Greek, epitaphios; in Slavonic, plaschanitsa) depicting the dead Saviour is placed on the altar table.

There is in the person of Jesus Christ the perfect unification of the perfect love of man toward God and the perfect love of God toward man. It is this divine human love which is contemplated and praised over the tomb of the Saviour.
From: <https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/>

HOLY SATURDAY

April 30, 2016

Great and Holy Saturday is the day on which Christ reposed in the tomb. The Church calls this day the Blessed Sabbath.

“The great Moses mystically foreshadowed this day when he said: God blessed the second day. This is the blessed Sabbath This is the day of rest, on which the only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works....” (Vespertal Liturgy of Holy Saturday)

By using this title the Church links Holy Saturday with the creative act of God. In the initial account of creation as found in the Book of Genesis, God made man in His own image and likeness. To be truly himself, man was to live in constant communion with the source and dynamic power of that image: God. Man fell from God. Now Christ, the Son of God through whom all things were created, has come to restore man to communion with God. He thereby completes creation. All things are again as they should be. His mission is consummated. On the Blessed Sabbath He rests from all His works.

THE TRANSITION

Holy Saturday is a neglected day in parish life. Few people attend the Services. Popular piety usually reduces Holy Week to one day – Holy Friday. This day is quickly replaced by another – Easter Sunday. Christ is dead and then suddenly alive. Great sorrow is suddenly replaced by great joy. In such a scheme Holy Saturday is lost. In the understanding of the Church, sorrow is not replaced by joy; it is transformed into joy. This distinction indicates that it is precisely within death that Christ continues to effect triumph.

TRAMPLING DOWN DEATH BY DEATH

We sing that Christ is “...*trampling down death by death*” in the Troparion of Easter. This phrase gives great meaning to Holy Saturday. Christ’s repose in the tomb is an “active” repose. He comes in search of His fallen friend, Adam, who represents all men. Not finding him on earth, he descends to the realm of death, known as Hades in the Old Testament. There He finds him and brings him life once again. This is the victory: the dead are given life. The tomb is no longer a forsaken, lifeless place. By His death Christ tramples down death by death.

THE ICON OF THE DESCENT INTO HADES

The traditional icon used by the Church on the feast of Easter is an icon of Holy Saturday: the descent of Christ into Hades. It is a painting of theology, for no one has ever seen this event. It depicts Christ, radiant in hues of white and blue, standing on the shattered gates of Hades. With arms outstretched He is joining hands with Adam and all the other Old Testament righteous whom He has found there. He leads them from the kingdom of death. By His death He tramples death.

“Today Hades cries out groaning:

I should not have accepted the Man born of Mary.

He came and destroyed my power.

He shattered the gates of brass.

As God, He raised the souls I had held captive.

Glory to Thy cross and resurrection, O Lord!”

(Vespers Liturgy of Holy Saturday)

THE VESPERAL LITURGY

The Vespers of Holy Saturday inaugurates the Paschal celebration, for the liturgical cycle of the day always begins in the evening. In the past, this service constituted the first part of the great Paschal vigil during which the catechumens were baptized in the “baptisterion” and led in proces-



sion back into the church for participation in their first Divine Liturgy, the Paschal Eucharist. Later, with the number of catechumens increasing, the first baptismal part of the Paschal celebration was disconnected from the liturgy of the Paschal night and formed our pre-paschal service: Vespers and the Liturgy of St Basil the Great which follows it. It still keeps the marks of the early celebration of Pascha as baptismal feast and that of Baptism as Paschal sacrament (death and resurrection with Jesus Christ – Romans 6).

On “*Lord I Call*” the Saturday Resurrectional stichiras of Tone 1 are sung, followed by the the special stichiras of Holy Saturday, which stress the death of Christ as descent into Hades, the region of death, for its destruction. But the pivotal point of the service occurs after the Entrance, when fifteen lessons from the Old Testament are read, all centered on the promise of the Resurrection, all glorifying the ultimate Victory of God, prophesied in the victorious Song of Moses after the crossing of the Red Sea (“*Let us sing to the Lord, for gloriously has He been glorified*”), the salvation of Jonah, and that of the three youths in the furnace.

Then the epistle is read, the same epistle that is still read at Baptism (Romans 6:3-11), in which Christ’s death and resurrection become the source of the death in us of the “old man,” the resurrection of the new, whose life is in the Risen Lord. During the special verses sung after the epistle, “Arise, O God, and judge the earth,” the dark lenten vestments are put aside and the clergy vest in the bright white ones, so that when the celebrant appears with the Gospel the light of Resurrection is truly made visible in us, the “*Rejoice*” with which the Risen Christ greeted the women at the grave is experienced as being directed at us.

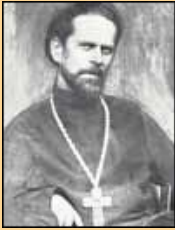
The Liturgy of St Basil continues in this white and joyful light, revealing the Tomb of Christ as the Life-giving Tomb, introducing us into the ultimate reality of Christ’s Resurrection, communicating His life to us, the children of fallen Adam.

One can and must say that of all services of the Church that are inspiring, meaningful, revealing, this one: the Vespers and Liturgy of St Basil the Great and Holy Saturday is truly the liturgical climax of the Church. If one opens one’s heart and mind to it and accepts its meaning and its light, the very truth of Orthodoxy is given by it, the taste and the joy of that new life which shines forth from the grave.

Rev. Alexander Schmemmann

Source: <http://www.pravmir.com/holy-week-day-by-day-great-and-holy-saturday/>

For Reflection



‘Three paths lead from the Holy Supper. Christ chose the path of ascetic struggle, of suffering, death, and resurrection. The Apostles slept in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas chose betrayal, despair, perdition.’

Fr. Alexander Elchaninov (1881-1934) Diary of a Russian Priest

THE LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS



The eucharistic Divine Liturgy is not celebrated in the Orthodox Church on lenten weekdays, since the festive spirit of the Liturgy is not compatible with the ‘bright sadness’ of fasting. In order, however, for the faithful to sustain their lenten effort by participation in Holy Communion, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served. The service is an ancient one in the Orthodox Church. We officially hear about it in the canons of the seventh century, which obviously indicates its development at a much earlier date.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service. It is the solemn lenten Vespers with the administration of Holy Communion added to it. Holy Communion is given from the Holy Gifts sanctified on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, hence its name of “presanctified.”

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is appointed to be served on Wednesday and Friday. Although for practical reasons it is often served in the morning, it is properly served in the evening after a day of spiritual preparation and total abstinence. The faithful who are unable to make the effort of total fasting because of weakness or work should fast for at least 6 hours before receiving Communion at this Liturgy.

Adapted from: <https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/liturgy-of-the-presanctified-gifts>

FASTING FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN:

Archpriest Dimitry Karpenko answers some common questions.



- Are pregnant women allowed to eat meat while fasting?

- The question is not whether pregnant women must or must not eat meat. Fasting is not about that at all, and this is what pregnant Orthodox women must realise. Whatever is needed should be eaten, and if there is a need for meat, then let it be meat. It is better to not to think of that at all. A pregnant woman should not think about food, just eat whatever is necessary. The most important is to make sure that her soul is free from all the things that are not necessary: My son, (well, in this case – daughter), give me your heart (Prov. 23:26), not your stomach.

- Taking into consideration that children's bodies are developing, should they fast the same way as grown-ups, or should rules be relaxed for them?

- For our own children, we have determined the following restrictions: no sweets and no cartoons. It does not seem reasonable to me to impose any other restrictions on children who are 3-5 years old. Obviously there are some hard-core parents, but it is up to them to decide, after all. At the moment, the restrictions that I mentioned above are enough to make children understand that this is done not just for the sake of it.

The Ten Commandments of God

GOD'S COMMANDMENTS. THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus, 20:13)

The sixth commandment orders us to respect our life and the life of other people as one of the greatest and most marvellous gifts of God. Only the Author and the Giver of life can determine man's span of life.

In light of this commandment, it should be obvious that suicide is

a grave sin. Being one form of murder, it includes in itself the sins of despair, lack of faith and a rebellion against God's providence. The most frightening aspect of suicide is that by forcefully terminating his own life one forfeits the very possibility of repentance of this sin, since after death repentance is not accepted. In order not to be overcome by despair, one must remember that temporary sufferings are allowed by God to make us better Christians. No righteous person was able to avoid sufferings. The path to Heaven is a narrow and thorny one. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus clearly illustrates the meaning of earthly sufferings. Abraham said to the rich man tormented in hell, "*Son, remember that in your lifetime you received many good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and you are tormented*" (Luke 16:19-31). *While enduring suffering, one must remember that God is exceedingly merciful. He will never allow one to suffer beyond one's strength, and during the most difficult moments He invariably strengthens and consoles the person who believes in Him.*

There exist several forms of murder - direct, indirect, spiritual, etc. A person is guilty of murder even when he does not commit the murder himself but promotes the murder or allows someone else to do it. For example: a judge condemning an accused person to death when his innocence is known; anyone who does not save a neighbour from death when he is fully capable of doing it; anyone who helps another commit murder by his decree, advice, collaboration, or rationalization, or who condones and justifies a death and by that gives opportunity for more killing; anyone who by hard labour or cruel punishment exhausts victims into a weakened state and thus hastens their death.

Abortion is also a form of murder. Several Church laws impose severe penance on women who kill babies in their womb and on those who assist them in this. (Check the 2nd and 8th rules of St Basil the Great, the 21st rule of the Council of Ankir, and the 91st rule of the 6th Ecumenical Council).

In accordance with Evangelical teaching, "*Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him*" (1 John 3:15) anyone who harbours feelings of hatred or anger, anyone who wishes evil to another person, slanders, quarrels, or by some other means displays his enmity towards others, violates the sixth commandment. To

prevent us from harming each other, the Lord Jesus Christ commands us to root out from our hearts all feelings of anger and vengeance which are the ultimate cause of all violent actions against others. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ said: *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment ... You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also ... You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven”* (Matthew 5:21-40).

Besides physical murder, there exists a spiritual form of murder which is an even more horrible sin because of its eternal consequences: tempting someone. Anyone who lures a person away from his faith in God or seduces to sin, kills him spiritually. The Saviour thus said about the severity of the sin of tempting others, *“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck ... Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to the man by whom the offense comes”* (Matthew 18:6-7)!

By Bishop Alexander Mileant.

Abridged article from the website www.fatheralexander.org

British and Irish Saints

VENERABLE GUTHLAC OF CROWLAND, WONDERWORKER

Commemorated: April 11/24

St Guthlac of Crowland is considered to be the most popular pre-Norman English saint after St Cuthbert. Orthodox Christians call him “the English Anthony the Great”. The large abbey church, situated in the village of Crowland in Lincolnshire in the district known as the Fens—the site of ascetic life of Guthlac— attracts thousands of pilgrims every year.

Numerous desert fathers in ancient times, especially in Egypt, lived in deserts.

Britain does not have natural deserts, so Guthlac preferred to live as a hermit, surrounded by dangerous and impassable bogs from all sides.



The Life of Guthlac drawing, kept at The British Library

The Life of Guthlac was written by the Monk Felix 20 years after the saint's repose. Guthlac was born in 673 in the kingdom of Mercia in a noble family related to the royal house. The birth of Guthlac was accompanied by miracles. He grew into a clever adolescent, his face always shone with a spiritual joy. However, with time his temper changed radically: he became inspired by deeds of heroes of the old times. At the age of 15, Guthlac formed his own gang and gave himself up to banditry and bloody raids on neighbouring settlements.

He spent nine years in such grave crimes until one day he suddenly remembered about the Lord. Guthlac confessed his previous sins to God and firmly decided to be His faithful servant. He gave back all his loot to the people and came to the Monastery of Repton in Derbyshire. He was tonsured and lived for two years there. Once he had read the Lives of the Egyptian fathers he began to have a strong desire to imitate their way of life. He chose a small, uninhabited isle of Crowland where hordes of demons dwelt. So he moved there and stayed as a true hero, a warrior of Christ, for the remaining 15 years of his life. Guthlac built a little cell and a chapel. The saint wore animal skins and ate once a day. Most of the day he prayed and gave himself up to divine contemplation.

The hermit had numerous temptations during his life on Crowland. The wretched spirits vexed him for years until he finally drove them away. The saint won his battles by the sign of the cross, by reading the Psalter, and by petitions for "emergency" help to his patron-saint – the Apostle Bartholomew (who gave him a scourge for casting out demons!). Among his temptations were despair, the memory of his former sins and of the outside world—with much courage he struggled with all these thoughts. Angels appeared to him for consolation and one angel descended to his cell every night and conversed with him.

Once Guthlac was praying in the quiet of the night. Suddenly a multitude of demons approached him. Their appearance was indescribably ugly, they uttered horrifying noises and filled his dwelling. The demons seized the man of God, dragged him to the bog and dipped him into the dirty water. Then they threw him into a thicket of brambles so that his body was bleeding. The saint prayed unceasingly. Then they beat him with iron bars and commanded him to go away from Crowland. But Guthlac did not heed their threats. The demons on their

ugly wings raised him high up into space where he felt cold and dark. Next they threw him into hell where there was fire, suffering and thousands of demons. There he saw how evil spirits tormented the souls of unrepentant sinners and they were about to start tormenting him. The holy man exclaimed that he was not afraid of the cursed spirits but he was waiting for the will of God. Suddenly the Apostle Bartholomew appeared and the demons scattered like dust. With the help of the apostle the saint was returned to his cell where angels sang him wondrous songs. One day demons burst into the saint's hut and set it on fire with a phantom fire. The next moment they started beating the ascetic with spear points. Guthlac started singing the Psalter and the demons vanished.

At last the tempters left that site forever and the place became holy. As a reward for his fearless labours, Guthlac was granted great wisdom, the spirit of prophecy, clairvoyance, and the ability to heal diseases and to expel demons from possessed people. He was a close friend of wild animals - beasts, birds and fishes - he fed and protected them and nature served him as its master.



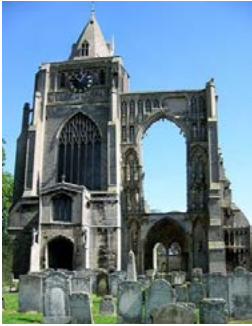
St. Guthlac of Crowland

The fame of Guthlac spread all over Mercia and finally all England. People flocked to his hermitage: the young and old, sick and suffering, poor and rich, peasants and nobles: all received healing, good advice, and consolation. Sinners changed their way of life.

One day an ascetic came to Guthlac. As they were sitting in his cell, two swallows flew into it through the window and joyfully sang their song to the saint. They landed on the shoulders of Guthlac, next on his breast, hands and knees, doing it very affectionately. The ascetic was amazed and asked why they were so fearless.

Guthlac replied that wild creatures always make friends with those who live according to the will of God, but they flee those who seek to be close to the external world. In time Bishop Hedda ordained Guthlac as a priest. Guthlac used to repeat: "Do not fear, but be steadfast, for the Lord is your Helper", encouraging people to put their hope in God alone in difficult situations.

Eight days before his repose Guthlac fell ill. He died on the Bright Wednesday 714. At the moment of his repose his cell was filled with the sweetest aroma, everything around was lit up with an unearthly light in comparison with which the sunlight was dusk, and the air was filled with angelic singing. A year after Guthlac's death his tomb was opened: the body of the saint was absolutely intact, by his look and flexibility of his limbs he resembled a sleeping man, and all the



Crowland Abbey

garments on him were absolutely unchanged.

Veneration for Guthlac flourished throughout the Middle Ages. The Abbey of the Virgin Mary, Sts Bartholomew and Guthlac grew into a large and prosperous monastery and countless cases of miracles from Guthlac's relics were reported. In about 870 the pagan Danes attacked Crowland and killed the Holy Abbot Theodore (whose head is kept in the Abbey Church to this day) together with many monks when they were serving the Liturgy.

In 1539 by order of Henry VIII Crowland Abbey was dissolved and the relics of Guthlac destroyed. However, popular veneration for him has never ceased. Some 10 churches are dedicated to St Guthlac.

Dmitry Lapa

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/78881.htm>

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE GRAND DUCHESS ELIZABETH ROMANOV SOCIETY

at Eastwell Manor on Sunday 6th March 2016



The first meeting of our new Society was held in this historic building, now a Hotel, in which the Grand Duchess Elizabeth visited members of the British Royal Family during the time when it was a royal residence. It proved to be a most suitable venue when about 60 members and supporters gathered to inaugurate the Society dedicated to spreading knowledge of the life, values and faith

of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, Queen Victoria's granddaughter, a remarkable benefactor of the poor and a Martyr of the 20th century.

The evening began with the playing of selected parts of a film of the Grand Duchess' life "White Angel of Moscow" made in Russia in 2009 with an English commentary. This gave an introduction to her story which was of interest both to those who knew her well and to those who knew little of her story. This was followed by a fascinating lecture from the noted historian and biographer Charlotte Zeepvat on the life of the Grand Duke Sergey and Elizabeth in Moscow when he was acting as Governor-General of Moscow, and up until his tragic death at the hand of assassins in 1905.

The story of Elizabeth's life was brought right up to its conclusion by the dramatic reading of a moving letter by her sister Victoria written from Port Said where she met Elizabeth's coffin on its way to the final resting place in Jerusalem in 1920. This brought home how deeply she was loved and recalled the episodes in the film covering her decision to stay in Russia with her sisters and their mission to the poor; a decision which led to her brutal death, seen now as the martyrdom of a faithful and virtuous soul.

The evening concluded with a concert of Russian music, generously provided by various friends and supporters. Alexey Knupffer overcame the limitations of a decidedly inferior piano with some of his own compositions and music from Rachmaninov. Tenor Gary Marriott delighted us with two operatic songs, and soprano Lilia Moshtael, accompanied by Nadia Giliova, gave us a moving recital of romantic songs.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to the evening's entertainment, which was very well received by the audience.

We would also like to thank all those who attended this event, many of whom were very generous in their offerings in support of the future work of the Society. Projects including a travelling exhibition of artifacts from Moscow and elsewhere and a one person show based on the Empress Maria's recollections of Elizabeth while in exile are to be planned over the coming weeks. Details will be forthcoming, so watch this space!

Paul Oxborrow

Secretary, Grand Duchess Elizabeth Romanov Society

Holy places in London

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH AND BARKING ABBEY RUINS

A convent was founded in Barking, to the east of London, in about 660 by St Erconwald, Bishop of London, who performed many miracles. His sister, St Ethelburgh (+ 675), was its first abbess and she was venerated for her wisdom and care. Her successor was the holy and highly educated Abbess Hildelith (+ 712). Both abbesses were buried in the convent, but their graves are now lost.

The Venerable Bede recounted life in Barking and the miracles that occurred there, for example, the healing of a poor-sighted woman and how many saw a supernatural light in the convent. Some miracles were connected with the holy nun Thorgyth (+ 700), who bore her paralysis with great patience. In the late 7th century there lived in Barking a holy nun called Cuthburgh, who later founded

the great convent in Wimborne in Dorset. In the 10th century, at the time of the monastic revival in England, Barking had another saintly abbess named Wulfhild (+ 1000).



St Margaret's Church

For 900 years Barking was one of the best-known holy sites near London and in the Middle Ages became a great abbey. Today there remains only one church, St Margaret's, and a former gatehouse called the curfew tower. The church itself dates from the 13th century and was built by the convent for the townsfolk. It survived the Reformation and is still used as a parish church; in 1762 the explorer James Cook was married there.

The church is richly decorated inside in various styles. The main surviving shrine is the early cross (kept in the chapel on the top of the tower). In the Middle Ages this carved stone crucifixion attracted countless pilgrims. It was carved in the 12th century; the Mother of God and St John the Theologian are depicted on either side of the crucified Saviour. Before the Dissolution this Cross was located on the convent wall. Stone crucifixions were rare in England, most were wooden.

St Margaret's is open every weekend and the gatehouse is open to the public on the first, third and fifth Wednesdays of the month. The main convent church stood nearby. Parts of its foundations still survive -it was some 100 metres long! The convent was very important and by the 16th century - one of the wealthiest in England. However, by 1541 it lay in ruins, a victim of the Reformation.

Dmitry Lapa

The Russian Church in London

A BRIEF HISTORY. PART III

The first Rector of the Embassy Church of the Dormition, Archimandrite Genadius, reposed in the Lord in the beginning of 1737. Fr Bartholomew (Cassano), who by then was widowed, and tonsured a monk, became Rector. According to Prince Antioch Kantemir, a well-known poet and the first Russian envoy to London after a twelve-year break, Fr Bartholomew 'spoke and wrote English like a born Englishman'. The church inventory for 1749 lists English translations of the two Liturgies, Priest's Service Book, Catechism, and a box of sermons in English and Greek.

Hieromonk Bartholomew celebrated mostly in Greek, but also in English. The small congregation included Russian diplomats and their families, a few Greek and Russian merchants (between 1681 and 1838 London's Greeks didn't have a separate church), Russian commoners living in England, and a dozen English families who were received into Orthodoxy (among them Philip Ludwell, an American living in London, and his daughters).



Philip Ludwell III who became Orthodox in 1738

Soon after the death of Archimandrite Gennadius the Holy Synod sent to London Hieromonk Ioann (Yastremsky) to help Fr Bartholomew, but soon after transferred him to Holland. With Fr Ioann came two readers (a reader is a lower rank of Orthodox clergy). In the 18th century Russian church readers were also known as 'dyachki' (sextons) or 'tserkovniki' (lower ranks of clergy). The readers for the London church were usually chosen from among seminarians or the choristers of the Imperial Court Capella. They prepared and sang the services, and kept the church clean. For the next 130 years the clergy numbers at the Embassy church were to remain the same: a priest and two readers.

Hieromonk Bartholomew died in 1746. At the request of the Russian envoy, the Athonite monks Gennadius and Jeremias served in the church until the arrival of Antipa Martinianov, formerly Archpriest at the Archangel Michael Cathedral in the Kremlin. Archpriest Antipa soon fell ill and begged to return home. On the Russian Ambassador's advice Stefan Ivanovsky, one of the Embassy church readers and a former student at the Moscow Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy, was ordained priest and became the new Rector. Fr Stefan, 'a quiet, devout and rather well-educated man', married to Anna Johnson, served in the Church of the Dormition until his death in 1765.

During Fr Stefan Ivanovsky's rectorship the church moved for the first time. Fr Stefan complained to the Ambassador that the church 'has fallen into a state of extreme dilapidation and poverty, since the house where the church is has become so decrepit that every day I expect it to crumble down'. The house stood 'in a disreputable and shameful place' (after dark prostitutes looking for customers were walking the Strand, then London's main commercial street, so the church had to employ a man to guard the doors during services). In 1756 the church moved closer to the Embassy, to Burlington Gardens, north of Piccadilly. As before, a large drawing-room was turned into a church. The annual rent for a house in a good area was 400 roubles (£80), twenty times more than the old one.

After Fr Stefan's death Hieromonk Efrem (Dyakovsky), a preacher and 'teach-

er of higher learning' came to London from Kiev. Fr Efrem did not stay long, leaving for Moldavia, where he spent twenty-five years in a monastery under the guidance of his compatriot the Venerable Paisius Velichkovsky. After the latter's repose in 1794, Fr Efrem – tonsured Ioann in the great schema – wrote a funeral lament for his burial, and compiled the first service to Ven. Paisius. Schema-Hieromonk Ioann followed his elder four months later.

Michael Sarni

“FAITH IN GOD IS MY MAIN MUSICAL TEACHER”

Interview with an opera singer Maria Veretenina

To mark the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in the British Isles, the concert given by Maria Veretenina, (a dramatic coloratura soprano) took place in the Dormition Cathedral in London on the Feast of the Nativity of Christ. The concert was a remarkable event for the parish. Its programme was very varied and included ecclesiastic musical pieces by Russian and international composers.



*Maria Veretenina
(foto by Alastair Merrill)*

Following the concert, the grateful audience simply could not let Maria leave, with so many of them approaching her to express their gratitude for such a wonderful Christmas present. Veretenina's performance truly touched the hearts of the audience, with people describing it as a 'divine voice' and an 'eternal, timeless recital'.

Maria's voice is recognisable by its inimitable sensuous temperament, as observed by several European prints. Maria has kindly agreed to share her journey to faith, to tell us about when she started to sing and to share with us her musical inspiration.

-Maria, tell us, please, how and where did you become a believer? Was it your parents that brought you to the Church, or was it more of your own path?

-It happened to be that in the course of few generations, our family was half Orthodox and half Catholic. My grandmother brought all seven of her grandchildren to the Church, when they were at a very young age. She told us about God, faith, prayer and saints. She was an Orthodox, but all her life she has been going to the Catholic Church, since her husband, my grandfather Waclaw Perchalski, was from an old aristocratic family of Catholic faith. Besides, the

Catholic Church was the only church in the village where they lived.

So, it was my grandmother who implanted the love to God in me. Also, one of my great grandfathers was an Orthodox priest. His name was Fr. Pavel. I pray for the souls of my ancestors very often and ask them to pray for me. Over thirteen years I sang in the children's choir. Many of the songs in the choir's repertoire were those of Orthodox musical pieces. We often used to go to the monastery of Puhtitsa, which is famous for its spiritual traditions.

-When and how did you begin to sing? What made you decide to become a singer?

- I believe I was born to be a singer. When I was four years old, my parents and I went on holiday to Sochi, and I somehow suddenly found myself performing with the orchestra. This was the point in my life that determined everything. It was not my goal to become a singer, singing simply was and always will be my life. A singer can't exist without a song, the audience and the stage, same as fish cannot live out of water. Recently I gave birth to my son. He is only 8 months old, but he has been singing since he was born. The voice is given to us by God, but it is our own responsibility to develop the talent.

- I suppose that your son will be pleasing the audience with his marvellous singing. Maria, how did it happen that you started singing in the Church?

As I mentioned previously, I was chanting in the children's choir since I was a young child. Occasionally we also sang during the church services.

-Do you still chant during the Church services?

- Now I am just a parishioner. I do not chant in the church since I am often away performing on tours. I also give lessons in singing and lead the Maria's Singers choir.

-Maria, whom do you consider to be your musical teachers, especially when it comes to the Orthodox chanting?

-Everything comes from the heart, through word, through music! I believe that faith in God is my main teacher and inspiration. I have been studying in the Academy of Music and have received a Master's degree. I also studied in Italy. Now, with such a background, one should only practice faith and chanting, for at least 3 or 4 hours a day, although it can be quite difficult to stop!

- There is much liturgical singing in your repertoire, and I must say your repertoire varies significantly in the difficulty of performance and by the level of popularity. There are prayers of Balaam chanting, the "Cherubic Hymn" of Pavel Chesnokov, songs of the hieromonk Roman and popular spiritual musical pieces of Tchaikovsky, and of course, international musical pieces. How do you manage to maintain such a variety?

- I have taken many lessons on baroque music, performed chamber music and lyrical songs of Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Russian romance songs, and of course different operatic works and liturgical pieces, so my repertoire is very diverse. Given that I have been singing since my early childhood, I struggle to count how many songs and musical pieces I know. Of course, when you prepare a specific concert, pieces need to be recalled and refreshed, which takes serious preparation.

-How does the Western audience receive the ecclesiastic chanting? What do they like most?

-If you sing from your heart and soul, the audience can sense it, no matter in what language the song is sung. It isn't possible to deceive an audience.

-What do you sing for your own leisure most often?

- What I love most, is singing at the back of my mind, without making a sound. That being said, every muscle of my body and vocal ligaments are still working. As the saying goes "sing from the heart". It could be some musical pieces that are new to me, new cadenzas of my own composition that come to mind, and of course, there is always time for prayer.

By Julia Pliauksta.

Maria was born in Tallinn, Estonia. She graduated from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. She studied at the National Academy of St Cecilia, Rome. Maria is a nominee of several prestigious international awards. Amongst her teachers there were such stars of the world opera as Montserrat Caballe. In 2014 Maria won Grand Prix of the international competition of English music and Russian Romance song in Royal College of Music, London. In 2011 she was the invited soloist at Finnish National Opera in Helsinki. Maria performs in Russia, Italy, France, Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain and other countries. Apart from that, Maria gives singing lessons and is the leader of vocal school Maria's Singers.

Forthcoming Events

ANNUAL CONFERENCE: "OUR VOCATION "

June 10th – 12th, 2016, High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire

The Annual Conference provides a unique opportunity for people to gather in prayer, fellowship and fruitful discourse. It is a weekend away, open to all members of the Russian Orthodox Church in Great Britain and Ireland. This year, it forms a central element in the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the establishment of the first Russian Orthodox Church in these Islands.



The themes of vocation and service are fundamental in the life of a Christian. It is easy enough to think of vocation as relating primarily to clergy, as the ‘professionals’ who have a unique leadership role in the Church. However, the

picture we have from the Scriptures and the life of the early Church is of a much richer and more diverse pattern of ministry in which all have a necessary function in the life of the Body. In the year that the Russian Orthodox Church marks 300 years of service in Great Britain and Ireland, our conference will explore this and related questions in a series of talks, seminars and group discussions. There will be a programme for children related to the theme of the conference. As always, our common prayer, together with our bishop and clergy, will be at the heart of our time together.

Confirmed speakers include: *Mikhail Sarni* , *Archimandrite Meletios (Webber)*, *Archpriest Alexei Uminsky*, *Sister Vassa (Larin)*.

The cost of the weekend ranges from £120 to £150 depending on the type of accommodation selected and includes all meals. Non-residential attendance is also possible. Talks will be given in English or Russian, with translation. Places are limited, so please apply as soon as possible. As far as resources allow, some financial assistance will be available for those who cannot otherwise afford the full amount of the fees – please apply at once.

For more details, and to apply – please see www.sourozh-conference.org

We need to receive all applications by Sunday 8th May.

Blessing of the kulichs

The blessing of the kulichs will be on **Great Saturday the 30th April** - during the day, **from 13:00 till 23:00**, **after the Easter Liturgy at about 3:00**, and also **after the Late Divine Liturgy about 13:00 on Sunday, May 1st.**

Kulichs may be bought at the Cathedral from the 24th April.’

Pilgrimage to the Saints of Barking

The annual Barking pilgrimage will take place on Saturday 14 May, 12:00-16:00 (approx) at Barking Abbey. Anyone who would like further information may contact barkingorthodoxpilgrimage@yahoo.co.uk

Holy Unction

During Lent in the Dormition Cathedral the Sacrament of **Holy Unction** will take place **every week: on April, 7, 14, 21, 27**. It is blessed to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Unction only once in a year. It is essential to determine in advance the date of your participation in the Sacrament and to record your name at the candle desk for commemoration during the service.

Because of the connection between repentance and healing, **the service of Holy Unction begins with Confession**. Children of 7 years or under, who do not yet participate in Confession, do not participate in Holy Unction. The faithful are anointed with the holy oil seven times, on the forehead, nostrils, cheeks, lips, chest, and both sides of the hands. It is important to come dressed appropriately. Hair and scarves should be arranged so as to leave the face open, shirts and blouses must be open at the neck to permit anointing of the chest, sleeves should be short so that the oil does not come into contact with them. If you are holding a candle, please give it to your neighbour when the priest comes to anoint you so that it does not get in the way. You may bring some cotton wool to wipe off excess oil. This you may take home with you to anoint yourself or family members at times of illness. It should be burned when it is no longer of use. Alternatively, you may bring a small container and request some of oil remaining after the service.

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E-mail: londonsobornolistok@gmail.com

We welcome your stories of finding faith, conversion, pilgrimages etc. If you would like to leave feedback or contribute content to the Newsletter, please contact us at the above address. We are always happy to hear from our readers.

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- Cash to the church collection boxes
- Online via the diocesan website www.sourozh.org (click «Donate»)
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